

News Release

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office

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Service Reopens 15-Day Public Comment Period on Proposed Critical Habitat for Molokai, Lanai, Maui and Kahoolawe

HONOLULU, Hawaii –The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is reopening a 15-day comment period on the proposed critical habitat designation of 135 species found on the islands of Molokai, Lanai, Maui and Kahoolawe, which are collectively known as Maui Nui.

The species addressed in the proposed critical habitat rule include three tree snails, two forest birds and 130 plants. The proposed critical habitat for these 135 species originally included approximately 271,062 acres.

The Service is reopening the comment period to allow public comments on the areas being considered for exclusion from critical habitat in the final rule. In total, the Service is considering the exclusion of 85,161 acres, including 59,748 acres on the islands of Maui and Molokai, and all critical habitat on Lanai, which is 25,413 acres. The Service is not currently considering any areas for exclusion on the island of Kahoolawe.

“These proposed exclusions are based on solid conservation agreements with local groups, which will protect threatened and endangered species while supporting land use. These conservation agreements demonstrate that threatened and endangered species can successfully coexist with the interests of private and public landowners” said Kristi Young, Acting Field Supervisor for the Fish and Wildlife Service’s Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office.

The Service specifically requests public comments and information on the benefits of including or excluding any specific areas in the final designation and supporting rationale, and whether any specific exclusions may result in the extinction of the species and why.

The Service will consider comments from all interested parties received by June 25, 2015. Comments may be submitted by one of the following methods:

- *Electronically:* Go to the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Search for Docket No. FWS–R1–ES–2013–0003, and follow the directions for submitting a comment.
- *Hard Copy:* Submit by U.S. mail or hand-delivery to: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS–R1–ES–2013–0003; Division of Policy, Performance, and Management Programs; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; MS: BPHC; 5275 Leesburg Pike; Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.
- All comments will be posted on <http://www.regulations.gov>.

Copies of this publication may be viewed at www.fws.gov/pacificislands/. For more information, contact Kristi Young, Acting Field Supervisor, Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office, 300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 3-122, Honolulu, HI 96850; (808) 792–9400; or by fax at (808) 792–9581.

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